

# State of the City Address: Mayor Mike Cassinelli

January 2012

Council members, guests and fellow residents and business owners. Thank you for joining me tonight.

Before we take a look back at 2011, I'd first like recognize the city's new community leaders for 2012:

- Joining the City Council are Vinessa Mulinix, who was elected to Council Position #2 in November, and Jon Chambreau, who was appointed to Position #4 in January. I would personally like to thank Butch Smith for filling in for the past six months. His contributions and input were greatly appreciated.
- Joining the Planning Commission is Ryan Crater, who was appointed to Position #5 in December. One seat still remains on the Planning Commission, as well as a seat on the Parks Commission, if anyone is interested in serving our community and fellow citizens.

As in 2010, the City Council made tough decision last year to ensure the financial viability of the city. I appreciate their efforts and ongoing support in these tough economic times.

Based on the 2010 Citizen Satisfaction Survey, maintaining city roads and sidewalks and improving storm drainage were identified as two of the top three areas of concern.

In 2011, the city took several steps toward improving city streets and sidewalks:

- Engineering and design work began on two projects funded by state Transportation Improvement Board grants—one for over \$600,000 to rebuild School Street and the other for \$99,000 to overlay Brumbach Avenue.

**By securing these grants, 95% of the project costs will be paid for by the grants.**

- A Stormwater Utility Fund was created to manage revenues and expenses for stormwater, freeing up much needed dollars for street improvements.

**By implementing the Stormwater Utility Fee on all parcels within the city, not just water and sewer customers, the city can ensure Motor Vehicle Fuel Taxes go directly toward road improvements, and the city's stormwater facilities can be properly repaired and maintained.**

- An overweight vehicle ordinance limiting truck through hauling on city streets was enacted.

**By reducing the impact of overweight vehicles on the city's arterial streets, the city can help protect and preserve existing and future streets within the city.**

- This past summer, the Port of Ilwaco chip sealed the parking lots using grant funds.  
**By piggy backing on the Port of Ilwaco's chip seal project, the city was able to improve Scarboro Lane in Vandalia at a discounted rate by using the same contractor..**
- In November, the city was awarded a Transportation Improvement Board sidewalk maintenance grant to improve portions of sidewalks on Advent and Lake Streets.  
**By securing this grant, the city will improve some of the worst sidewalks in the city for only 5% of the project costs, or \$3,000.**

In my 2011 address, I assured the citizens of Ilwaco that the issue of water rates and water quality would be addressed.

On the issue of water quality, last year the city collaborated with several state agencies to improve the water system:

- The city held monthly discussions with the Department of Health to prioritize improvements to the water system.  
**By working with DOH, the city crew maintained and repaired filters, pumps and other equipment, and the treasurer identified several funding opportunities to help offset capital improvement costs.**
- Three very low-interest loans were secured from the state Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund to improve the city's water facilities. These loans will fund construction of a 160,000 gallon reservoir near the water treatment plant, upgrades and expansion of the backwash basin and construction of a 500,000 gallon reservoir near the current city center reservoir site.  
**By securing these low-interest loans, the city can make capital improvements that will increase the capacity of the city's water system, replace an outdated old wooden reservoir and upgrade and expand the city's backwash basin to increase capacity and improve filtering.**
- Lastly, the old, leaking wooden Sahalee reservoir was decommissioned, and Sahalee residents were connected to the newer Discovery Heights reservoir.  
**By decommissioning the Sahalee Reservoir, the city reduced lost water and improved water service to the Sahalee residents.**

With the assistance of Rural Community Assistance Corporation and funding by the state Office of Drinking Water, in 2011 the council completed a water/sewer rate study that evaluated how much the city's utilities need to operate and looked at rate structures that would be fair to both residential and commercial customers.

As a result, the city took several steps to better serve our water customers:

- In April 2011, a lower base rate was implemented for all water customers and all consumption is now billed at a commodity rate. The council expects to implement a similar rate structure for the sewer utility within the next few months.  
**By moving to a consumption-based water rate structure, the costs of services are more fairly allocated to each customer, and customers can control their increase or decrease depending on their water usage.**
- Beginning this March, residential customers will be receiving water/sewer bills on a monthly basis.  
**By moving to monthly billing, customers will be able to budget more efficiently, discover leaks sooner and adjust their water usage habits by closer monitoring their consumption.**
- Radio read meters have been installed for 97% of residential customers.  
**By implementing this technology, the city can ensure the most accurate meter readings and vital information can be provided to customers when water leaks occur.**

In June 2011, the Ilwaco Parks and Recreation Commission was formed. Since then, members have helped manage a four-year \$75,000 grant awarded by the Department of Ecology Aquatic Weeds Management Fund to eradicate Brazilian Elodea on Black Lake. In the first six months of the grant, the commission and staff coordinated the application of aquatic herbicide to the weed, and the outfall was repaired. In 2012-2015, further efforts will continue to uproot the weed.

**By wiping out his invasive species that dominates 70% of the lake, the city can lessen the economic impacts on cranberry farms and improve recreational use of the lake for fishing, kayaking, swimming and boating.**

In 2011, the council also took steps to stimulate tourism and the local economy by enacting legislation that allows short-term rentals in the R-3 Resort District, as well as planned unit and cluster developments.

**By enacting this legislation, the city hopes to stimulate development that could bring one-time revenue to the city for permits and water /sewer connections, and create a new ongoing revenue stream for various licenses and taxes.**

As I conclude this look back at 2011 and look toward 2012, I hope you not only have a greater understanding of what our City Council accomplished this past year, but also a greater sense of what it means to you. As the city moves forward in 2012, the City Council will continue to manage your dollars in a fiscally responsible manner, and will continue to pursue new and alternative sources of revenue to leverage our dollars to improve city streets, utilities, police and fire services and parks.